

## Means of escape by OrangeLovePerson

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**Summary:** After a top-secret movie evening with El, Mike is stuck at the Hoppers' cabin. Set somewhere in the future, fluffy, tiny one-shot.

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"El, I'm not sure if this was such a great idea.", he said, into the quiet, dark room.

His voice matched the faint glint of blue from her night light, it was almost not recognisable.

"It was your idea, Mike.", she whispered back, just as silently.

"Yeah, exactly. I mean, I should have listened to you..."

"Oh. Thanks."

...

"Should I... Should I climb out of the window, El? What do you think?"

"And risk that he hears you."

"He wouldn't hear me! I've watched plenty of movies, El, I know how to sneak away from places, and stuff."

"Okay. Then, goodnight, Mike."

Sigh. "On the other hand..."

"Hmm?"

"I could really just stay here and sleep on the floor." He pondered, resting his head back against the foot of her bed. The timber piling he sat on was quite warm. "And in the morning, when Hopper drives to work, there'd still be enough time to grab my bike from out of the bushes and be in school on time..."

"You don't have to, Mike. Sleep on the floor, I mean."

Blush. "Oh...Er...Well, don't worry about that right now, okay, El? First of all I have to figure out what to do..."

"I thought you'd just done that."

"Yes, but... What if my Mum somehow notices that I'm not in my room any more? She'd call Dustin and Lucas and Will, to find out where I am... And of course they'd put two and two together and know that I'm at your place."

"Is that bad?"

"Well, kinda..."

"But Dustin and Lucas and Will already know that you're here a lot, right?"

"I guess, but that's a bit different, El. This time, Hopper doesn't even know that I'm here. I'm sorry, I really should have asked him first, instead of just come over here again... When you said he was working late I thought you meant, like, ten 'o' clock or something! Like last time."

"Last time was an emergency, he said. Working late means 8-1-5, mostly."

"Are you angry, El? I mean, because I made you lie to him at dinner?", Mike nervously wondered. She shrugged, laughing quietly.

"Friends don't lie, Mike. But I *wasn't*. I just didn't..."-, she was looking for a word, "- ...*mention* ...that you're here. He could have asked."

Mike snickered at her logic, then he sighed. "I shouldn't have stayed this long. I mean, it's the middle of the night, Hopper would probably get furious if he knew!"

"He wouldn't.", El confidently murmured.

"How do you know that?"

"It's not our fault that we fell asleep, Mike. It's just a *really* boring movie."

He chuckled. "Don't tell Lucas that you think so, okay? For some reason, he really likes all that computer animation stuff... I think they could have done a much better job, though. I need to show you *"Star Wars"*, sometime, you'll love that! It's with Yoda, remember when I told you about Yoda? The small, green..."

"Mike."

"Yeah?"

"You should just stay here."

His heart actually skipped a beat, right then. "You think so?"

He could hear her nod against the pillows.

"Well, okay, then... But what if my Mum *really* calls around? And Will's Mum finds out, and she tells Hopper, and then I'm not allowed to visit you here any more at all?"

"Would you still come and visit me?"

"Well, duh. Of course I would, El. But I'd rather stay on Hopper's good side, now that I'm finally on it. You know?"

"Will's Mum wouldn't tell. If she knew that you're here, she'd keep it a secret.", El whispered, smiling wisely.

Mike turned his head and returned her smile. "Why do you think she would?"

"Because she's nice.", El shrugged. And then she tapped on the mattress next to her. A silent invitation that made Mike blush *furiously*.

"Come on, Mike. There's not even carpet on the floor."

"I don't want to make you feel uncomfortable, or something, El.", Mike muttered, embarrassed, but stood up and sat on the bed next to her, anyway. She wordlessly made the sheets cover them both, and lay back down. Mike followed her example and also scooted lower on the bed.

"Watching movies with me is normal, but sleeping with me isn't Mike? Why?"

Mike turned more red than ever at El's choice of words, his eyes were probably instantly from falling out of his scalp.

"Oh man... Okay, so,... *sharing a bed* is sort of a... a family thing, El. Or a friends thing. But when people who aren't... friends or family... do that, it sort of becomes... a bit different, you see? Like... it's not really what Hopper would like us to do, I guess. Or my parents..."

"We are friends.", Eleven said, matter-of-factly. Mike wanted to move much closer and wrap an arm around her, but he really shouldn't, he reminded himself.

"Yes, we are, but..."

"But?"

"We also went to the Snowball together, remember?"

"And you don't really go to the Snowball with a friend. Or with your sister.", El concluded, and Mike grinned at her in the half-dark.

"Exactly, El."

"You go with someone that you *like*."

"Yes."

"But sharing a bed is something you don't do with people that you *like*."

He quietly laughed at her emphasis on "like". "M-hm.", he agreed.

"Because that would make the grown-ups grumpy.", Eleven went on.

"Very grumpy."

"Mike?"

"Yes, El?" He turned on his side, watching her closely, and she held his gaze. She was way too pretty, sometimes.

"I like you, Mike."

He reached for her hand, wrapping his fingers around hers, slowly. "I like you, too, El.", he whispered, voice weirdly thick, all of the sudden.

"But you're also my friend, Mike. So it's okay that you're here.", she decided.

She moved closer and now her forehead was almost touching his chest, and Mike stared as her eyes fluttered closed. And he was fairly certain that he wouldn't find sleep all too soon.

"Thanks, El.", he sighed, and when he realised how happy he was, right then, he really couldn't have cared less about some chance of getting caught.

This was worth it.

She always was worth it.

And that's what he thought about until sleep reached him.